

Community Forestry Interlocking Project

(Phase 2) – The Philippines

May 2003-April 2006

A continuation from the management planning for community forestry: An action research project, August 2000 to December 2002

Interim technical report May 2003 to April 2004



IIRR

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Project goal and objectives

Overall goal: To contribute to the release of the potential of communities in the Philippines to manage their forests whilst adding to the community forestry discourse within Southeast Asia and beyond...through the following objectives:

Objectives I) Community driven policy pilots: To learn from and with community members as local level forestry policies are directed towards increased rights over use and decision making by community members regarding the local forest resources.

Objective II) Supporting advocacy processes: Through the facilitation of multi-stakeholder communication platforms and publications to help accelerate pro-community changes in forest policy and in institutional and inter-institutional reform.

Objective III) Experiential training and learning: To enhance the learning capabilities of professionals to match the contemporary challenges that community forestry presents.

Additional overarching objective: Testing the interlocking activity approach: To evaluate the assumed complementary nature of the three approaches contained with this project.



The project activities reached all the way to Bhutan in April 2004 when at the request of the government of Bhutan an in-country context specific PAR for CBNRM course was conducted for 27 mid to senior level CBNRM professionals. The PAR for CBNRM course was developed by IIRR and RECOFTC with IDRC support over the last year. This training falls under objective 3 of the project and is seen as contributing to the overall goal.

Synthesis

What is contained in this report is a narrative summary with some sample insights into project activities over the last year. The financial statement for the last year with a short narrative has been submitted separately. For all activities discussed in this report there are detailed reports available on request. A time line of the project activities highlighted in this report are listed in the text box below.

2003 June: With RECOFTC developed a draft outline of PAR for CBNRM course structure, marketing mechanisms (brochure developed etc.) and MOU with RECOFTC also developed to formalize partnership (report available).

July: Developed and conducted a customized training on CBFM for senior Sri Lanka forestry officials testing the course structure developed for the PAR for CBNRM course for the first time (report/evaluation available).

August: Conducted participatory research at the request of a community in the Philippines to highlight the impact of the suspension of utilization rights from a community perspective (report available).

September: Second course planning meeting with RECOFTC. 27 sessions for the international course were developed all with all associated materials (report available).

October: At the request of community members at the study site who live in a protected area buffer zone. A local level 'Linking People to Policy' platform process was tested, which brought together forest park management and 'squatters' for the first time in 'constructive confrontation' to discuss park management (report available). Project coordinator attended and contributed to RECOFTC strategic planning workshop in Thailand (report available from RECOFTC)

November: Project coordinator develops and runs new international course on Farmer Led Extension in partnership with FAO in Kenya. The course was built on the same pedagogic structure (the PAR spiral) as that developed for the PAR for CBNRM course (report/evaluation available). *Staff development: One project staff attends international course on Case Study writing skills development in Bangkok.*

December: International course on PAR for CBNRM in partnership with RECOFTC conducted for the first time in the Philippines (report/evaluation available)

2004 January: Meeting with research director and professors of the School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, UK to discuss and formalize a research partnership – combining a PhD program with the project.

February: Project team contributed to international training on CBFM and hosted a JICA delegation (JICA are currently the largest financial supporters of CBFM in the Philippines) to discuss partnership strategies (JICA documents –project proposal presented at meeting available).

March: Restructured project management- revised job descriptions of current staff based on evolving workload and began the recruitment process for 2 new staff. Meetings with VSO etc. conducted (Report available). *Staff development: one staff attends international course on good governance in Bangkok*

April: Aimed at hastening the approval of the revised national CBFM guidelines in the Philippines, a region wide workshop was held with representation of 27 CBFM communities to develop a resolution to lobby DENR leadership to approve revised CBFM guidelines (Report available). Also in April the customized version of the PAR for CBNRM course was run for the first time at the request of the government of Bhutan, in Bhutan (Report/evaluation available).

At the end of phase I two of the project's three current components, the multi-stakeholder platform approach 'Linking People to Policy' and the field study sites had been established and methodology developed and tested for both. The 3rd component, the training component had not been developed or tested. Emphasis was thus placed on developing this component over the last year. The project team tested the building blocks of the new approach, a course structure based around conceptualisation- experimentation-reflection – re-conceptualisation and providing a stimulating environment for the exploration of different perspectives initially with a group of 6 senior Sri Lanka Forestry officials in July 2003 who we developed a customized course for in the Philippines. Then through planning meetings with RECOFTC we developed the full PAR for CBNRM international course which was held for the first time in December 2003 with 11 participants from 6 Asian countries. In February we used some of the methodology we had developed for the PAR for CBNRM course when we were invited to contribute to a DENR organised CBFM course for 25 participants from 7 Asian countries. In April 2004, on request from the Bhutanese Ministry of Agriculture we developed and ran a context specific PAR for CBNRM course for 27 mid to senior level government officials in Bhutan with a Bhutanese participant on the international course as a co-facilitator. This was the first experimentation of the course outside the Philippines. Through trial and error the course materials and approach have been developed, adapted and refined over the last year. Outputs of this course development are newly developed sessions/exercises, and the development/compilation of associated reading materials. The number of applicants for the second PAR for CBNRM course to be run in September 2004 has been greater than for the first. Joint course development has made up part of the discussions that are ongoing with JICA and the discussions planned with the College of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of the Philippines, Los Banos are also along the lines of partnership in training. We are hopeful that through these partnerships mid to senior level Philippine foresters can be targeted for the PAR for CBNRM course, something we struggled with over the last year. We only have one Filipino participant on the PAR for CBNRM international course.

We faced some significant barriers to planned activities concerning fieldwork and publications activities this year, but rather than be defeatist we tried to respond logically with constructive alternatives. With field studies we faced some barriers, notably the expected revisions in the Community Based Forest Management guidelines were not approved by the leader of the DENR as hoped. These revised guidelines were to be the basis that the project's policy process trials would be built around. In response to this we partnered with another NGO and organized a workshop in a region of the Philippines to attempt to speed the approval up. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the pros and cons of the revisions in the guidelines with representatives of 27 communities taking part in the CBFM program. The main output of this workshop was a resolution developed and signed by community members requesting the DENR Secretary to approve the revised guidelines as soon as possible and explaining why it was important from a community perspective to do so. The DENR Secretary acknowledged receipt, but as yet because of national elections the revised guidelines are still yet to be approved. To make matters worse the DENR Secretary in response to a sensationalized newspaper article

about the abuse of the resource rights of a group holding a CBFM agreement, suspended utilization rights for all communities engaged in the CBFM program. In response to this we explored the impact of this suspension on one of concerned communities. The results showed that the suspension actually benefited corrupt government officials, lowered the price villagers received for their forest products and resulted in increased forest utilization. We hope to present the case in an appropriate format and setting to enlighten senior DENR officials to some of the direct affects of these utilization bans.

Also in the field over the last year a group of villagers who settled in the buffer zone of a national park beside the communities we had been working with had heard about our 'Linking People to Policy' work so asked if we could link them to the park management who had never consulted with them on park management issues. Because time permitted we took the decision to do so and experimented with facilitating a 'Linking People to Policy' initiative at a local level (see photo), with community members presenting their concerns directly to park management, and park management and the community members coming together for the first time to discuss joint strategies to manage the park.



Application of a 'Linking People to Policy' process at a local level – Quezon National Park 'squatters' and park management were brought together by the project team in the last quarter of 2003 for the first time - for face-to-face 'constructive confrontation' and to find ways to work together.

Out of the process a new relationship was built between two previous opposing forces, the park management and what are classified as 'squatters'.

Through this experience the IIRR team has honed its 'Linking People to Policy' approach and grown more confident in the ability of the approach to deal with contentious issues and promote two-way dialogue where there had previously been a complete lack of communication. One concrete recommendation accepted by all after this process was to include 'squatters' in park management decision making.

With the supporting policy advocacy processes component we also had some barriers to overcome, this time internal at IIRR. The post-production of the first 'Linking People to Policy' publication was not completed as planned. This was due partly to changes in the IIRR publications staff combined with the fact that the post-production simply required a lot of work as much of the material was in very draft form and following up with authors has been necessary. Luckily a new publication team is now installed and this publication which combines a summary of the participants' papers and what we hope is an innovative overview of the actual workshop process, will soon be published.

We made a decision partly because of the delay in the publication from the first ‘Linking People to Policy’ workshop to cancel the workshop planned for this year. The workshop planned for this year had been a multi-perspective review of forestry curriculum. A second reason why we felt it may be good to cancel this workshop was that we thought it may be strategic to combine resources allotted for this year and next year’s write shops together to try and maximise impact of the workshop proposed for next year. The workshop proposed will be a multi-perspective critical review of 10 years of the CBFM programme in the Philippines. Preparations for this are already underway, discussions have been held with JICA on the possibility of partnering in such a workshop and a meeting has been arranged with the Dean and key professors in the College of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of the Philippines, Los Banos to discuss this. Community partners throughout the Philippines are presently being sought who will develop case studies and participate in this workshop. Meetings are planned with senior level DENR officials and leading NGOs working with CBFM in the Philippines to develop a broad coalition to ensure this workshop process is ‘owned’ by a spectrum of actors and is not seen as an ‘IIRR workshop’.

As we go into the 2nd year of phase 2, with all three-project components developed, tried and tested, (although always evolving) we look forward to running the 3 project components at full steam to maximise their impact over the next year. Movements are now taking place at the DENR leadership level and it looks like the revised CBFM guidelines will be approved shortly so that the policy process trials can go ahead as previously planned – a field office has been selected in anticipation of this work in the 3 core study sites. As well as the national workshop planned next year, possibilities of promoting such a ‘Linking People to Policy’ process in other countries of the region and even at a regional level will also be explored. With the training as well as running the courses and developing a manual we believe the experiential-discovery learning approach and methods that have developed could be harnessed to great affect in curriculum development and revision. Although the multiple perspective forestry curriculum writeshop planned this year, did not take place, we still recognise the need for and the potential impact of forestry curriculum revision/ development. The team will explore opportunities for this over the next year. Along this line the IIRR team will contribute to the IDRC organised CBNRM curriculum development workshop in Beijing in September 2004 along with other regional actors in CBNRM training delivery.

The research findings

Please also refer to the IIRR paper ‘ Helping the key fit the lock in CBNRM-Building initiatives on community perspectives in the Philippine community forestry context’ which is in the soon to be published IDRC ‘CBNRM in Action’ book. From this paper it will be noted that much of the research findings are related to processes, approaches and methods that have been developed by the IIRR team. Of note is the further development and refinement of the PAR-guiding spiral. This spiral has been adopted by other CBNRM project teams in the region as a guiding strategy both through its dissemination by IDRC officers and through PAR for CBNRM course participants who view the spiral as a useful

guide for their individual, and their organisation's work with NRM. We hope to continue the spread of this simple guide that seems to be helpful both for individuals and organisations working with participatory approaches who are struggling to find alternatives to blue print planning guides. Also the 'Linking People to Policy' communication platform approach has contributed to the interest in these kind of platforms in the region. Of note is that in the RECOFTC strategic plan for the next 5 years- multi-stakeholder communication platforms are one of the key approaches to be used to advance community forestry in the region. The IIRR team took part in the RECOFTC strategic planning process.

The most active component of the project this year in terms of approach and methodological development has been the development of the training component. As far as we know this is the first time PAR principles have been used so explicitly in an international NRM related training course. Notably mid-to senior-level professionals were targeted because it was thought they would have the potential to influence the most, including having a greater ability to influence organisational behaviour which may be necessary to provide space for the application of PAR principles.

Interestingly, the relevance of the course, according to almost all participants, seemed to have universal relevance across all the country contexts from which they came. Also from the Bhutan in-country course experience, it seems to be easily adaptable. This may be because the course participants' own experiences and a field program that includes exposure to multiple perspectives on NRM problems in that context make up the course content that the process and methods are applied to. How some participants felt about the PAR for CBNRM course after going through it is listed in the following text box.

'I now see that the community perspective is the most important to consider.'

'I never thought about multiple perspectives before.'

'I have started to see that there are not only multiple perspectives, but multiple agendas to appreciate.'

'I'm surprised at the different perspectives'

'The importance of not hiding failure and we really learn from reflection was clear. All parts of the spiral are equally important – I realized now. Usually when we work we tend not to reflect on our failure in our working context.'

'Very often we have missed the systematic learning process, particularly the reflection and planning based on the previous lessons.'

'Usually reflection and re-conceptualisation were not done, rather directly other options were tried (from scratch).'

'We (previously) did not know what to do if our programs fail.'

'(About the course approach) One cannot teach and teach and teach, creation of opportunity for learning can teach better.'

Key lessons from the PAR for CBNRM course as stated by participants

What follows are some photos and descriptions of methods used on the International course held in the Philippines in December 2003.



Professionals as learners, villagers are teachers. CBNRM professionals from throughout Asia taking part in the first PAR for CBNRM course listen intently as a village who is from one of the project field study sites explains the complexity of relationships between actors in the forest sector in the Philippines and the complexity of the causes of the problems in the forest sector. Course participants were challenged to pro-actively explore perspectives of 4 different sets of actors during the ‘experimentation’ module of the course; academics, senior government officials, NGOs and community member. Course participants were often amazed at the differences in perspectives and agendum that emerged and some developed mechanisms at the end of the course in which they and their organisations would incorporate multiple perspectives in their work with NRM.

An example of an experiential discovery learning method -developed and used for the course to explore the advantages of an action research as apposed to a blue print approach to planning: In the Philippines the exercise was called the 'coconut bridge' in Bhutan it became the 'melon bridge'.



Task: Plan and make a bridge between two chairs that will hold a coconut off the ground, use only specified materials and do not experiment.

1. A detailed 'blue print' plan was developed (above) for building the 'coconut bridge' with no experimentation allowed. Chances of success were rated at between 80 to 100% by the teams for plan implementation

2. The blue print plan is followed exactly (right) in the design of the bridge. Confidence is high but then as the coconut is placed...



3... above and right 'Those stupid chairs! Our bridge was perfect' was the comment from one participant as the unexpected happened in experimentation. The chairs slide together and the coconut slumped to the ground. In failed blueprint development projects could 'Those stupid farmers! Our project was perfect' be substituted? The parallels were discussed.

4. Through conceptualisation/ planning, experimentation, then reflection and re-planning/ re-conceptualisation a successful strategy was developed (right). A rolled paper was wedged to keep the chairs apart in addition to the bridge. The failure when embraced led to success. The question was raised that do we CBNRM professionals always have the luxury to use an experiential learning approach and embrace failures in our CBNRM work within conventional project set-ups?



Recent requests for spin off courses from the PAR and CBNRM initiative have been received by the team from the forest policy division FAO Rome, concerning a forestry training in northern Mongolia and from the senior policy researcher, Plan International, UK about an adaptation of the training to water resources management in the Philippines.

Project implementation and management

Over the last year, primarily because of a lesser than expected workload in the field as a result of a delay of the revised national CBFM guideline approval and because of the decision to cancel the workshop this year, expenditures were lower than expected, at only 49% of the budgeted amount. We had planned to hire two new staff at the beginning of this phase, one a Filipino researcher and the other an international volunteer through the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO). This hiring was postponed because of the lesser than expected workload. The hiring is now taking place, the Filipino researcher is on board and the VSO hiring is at an advanced stage.

At this stage the 3 project components have been fully developed and are ready for implementation on a larger scale. The core project team as a result of the expected increase in workload is growing from 3 to 5 persons and broader involvement from other IIRR staff in project activities will take place so that it will be an IIRR wide initiative. With a new publication team at IIRR the bottleneck we faced previously in the post-production of the 'Linking People to Policy' publication we will hopefully not face in future publication productions.

Partnership and coalition building has been a key management strategy for the project team. The project team over the last year has strengthened existing partnerships and built new ones. Over the next year at a national level the team will continue to work in coalition with national and local level DENR actors, key CBNRM NGOs and explore a more formal partnership with the College of Forestry and Natural Resources, University

of the Philippines Los Banos as well as formal partnership opportunities, as mentioned earlier with JICA for example. At a regional level we have renewed the partnership MOU with RECOFTC for another year and will explore new activities to collaborate on, apart from PAR for CBNRM course implementation, including manual development for the PAR for CBNRM course. Also in the region we have developed stronger links with organisations through our PAR for CBNRM course participants, for example with CBNRM professionals in Bhutan. Further a formal link has now been established between the project and the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia, United Kingdom. As part of a PhD program which is synchronised with the project objectives, three professors from this school will be providing input into research activities of the project. It is hoped that this will raise the quality of the project's research outputs. The school plays a role in many CBNRM research projects throughout Asia and encourages experience sharing between researchers, which we also see as being beneficial to the project activities.

From a project management perspective the guiding interlocking framework which links the field learning-publications/policy advocacy and training components has been found to be very useful over the last year and has helped ensure that the project outputs are complementary. Testing this framework is explicitly listed as an additional project objective as it is envisaged that this operational framework may be useful to other organisations to guide their work. Over the last year outputs from one component conveniently led into the others. Community members are involved in all three components and this 'anchor on the ground' is seen as essential. As well as enabling the development of responsive initiatives, it must be considered that this 'anchor' will give credence to both the 'Linking People to Policy' and 'Training of Learners' initiatives. During the international PAR for CBNRM course having community members (from the study sites) as resource persons and with the IIRR facilitator being able to refer to fresh field experiences in the sessions, gave the course a degree of relevance and credibility that it may not of otherwise had without the field link. In general without that link to communities would the IIRR research team be taken as seriously by policy makers and other professionals? On the other hand without the training courses and the Linking People to Policy workshops, would the field lessons have as much impact?

Project outputs and dissemination

As well as the contribution to the upcoming IDRC 'CBNRM in Action' book, the video of the 'Linking People to Policy' workshop has continued to be shared widely by the project team and our partners, RECOFTC. The IIRR team developed the PAR for CBNRM course in a participatory way during the last year, circulating questionnaires among key PAR and CBNRM actors and incorporating suggestions into the course design. Also all course reports were shared for comment. Rather than only disseminating project outputs when they are ready this approach of developing project activities together through dissemination of questionnaires etc. based on our experience with the PAR for CBNRM course will continue to be used to ensure many ideas from many people are harnessed and that ownership over project activities and outputs is increased. A compilation of all PAR for CBNRM course documents has been made both in hard

copy and CD. This is seen as a precursor to the development of a PAR for CBNRM course manual, which we plan to develop with RECOFTC over the next year. The long overdue 'Linking People to Policy' book will soon be published and highlights the process as much as the actual papers contributed by authors – we hope others will adopt and adapt the process lessons.

Capacity Building

The community forestry inter-locking project is the only project in the Regional Center for Asia at IIRR that explicitly links field learning, training and publications. IIRR program integration between what were previously 3 separate, and to a large extent independently operating field work-publications and training units has taken place over the last year and the community forestry project's example has played a role in this integration.

In addition other strategic inputs to IIRR as a whole have been ideas around the 'Linking People to Policy' initiative. This initiative provided an example of how IIRR's write shop methodology, previously geared to harnessing best practices, can be adapted to become a promising policy advocacy tool at a time when development organisations are searching for such tools.

With the PAR for CBNRM course initiative a course was developed to add to IIRR's portfolio of international course. Differing from many of the other 'Training of Trainers' type IIRR courses, the PAR for CBNRM course focuses more on 'Training of Learners'. The course more than any other at IIRR pushed the limits of the use of experiential and discovery learning techniques and has provided new methods which are being adopted/adapted on other IIRR and RECOFTC courses.

With specific staff skills development over the last year, 2 project staff attended international training courses, both at RECOFTC in Thailand. One course was on the development of case study writing skills and the other on good forest governance. The staff that attended the case study writing course has subsequently developed 2 analytical case studies and the staff that attended the good forest governance course has been experimenting with the application of the forest governance framework to the Philippine forest sector context.

Impact

The reach of the project over the last year has gone beyond the Philippines, notably with the PAR for CBNRM training initiative, but it is too early to talk about impact of this training. Also with no 'Linking People to Policy' workshop over the last year there was no opportunity to maximise potential impact on policy. In general over the last few years of the project we have been too busy developing initiatives to develop appropriate mechanisms to evaluate the outcome and impact of these initiatives. This will change over the next year, inherent in the work plan over the next two years and for the 2 new project staff are the development and experimentation of mechanisms that can be used to assess outcome and impact for project activities e.g. regarding the PAR for CBNRM trainings and the linking people to policy type workshops. Notably though as well as direct impact we hope that there will be indirect impact. The processes/approaches we develop or parts of them (notably over the last year through the PAR for CBNRM course

initiative) we hope will be adopted and adapted by others who will use them to good effect in their own organisation/project and context.

Recommendations

The major recommendation we would make to IDRC is to consider reasons why the expected expenditures did not match the actual expenditures over the last year. We did not spend project money for the sake of it but rather thought about cost/benefit analysis and most appropriate times to spend money to maximise potential impact. We under-spent according to budget this year which means we can overspend (on field work and the national workshop) next year when both the enabling policy environment (the approved revised national CBFM guidelines) and the fact that it is 10 years since the beginning of the CBFM programme will mean that activities have a higher chance of being relevant and fruitful. At the end of next year we suspect that the actual expenditures in the first 2 years and the budgeted amount for the first 2 years will be closer than they are at present after 1 year.

Other assistance provided by team members.

As well as community forestry work, project staff also contributed to other IIRR activities. One such activity was the development and running of an adapted International Course- Farmer Led Extension Africa – which was implemented for the first time in Kenya in 2003 in partnership with FAO. 23 participants from 6 countries attended, some were national department directors. As an experiment during this course the pedagogic structure designed for the PAR for CBNRM course was tested. The international PAR for CBNRM course was only one month later. The conceptualisation- experimentation - reflection-re-conceptualisation approach was much appreciated by the course participants. Some course participants even planned to adopt/adapt the ‘PAR’ spiral as a future guide for their organisation’s work. So in a way IDRC support which enabled the IIRR team to develop the PAR for CBNRM course over the last year has had potential impact far beyond its envisaged scope.